

WATERLOO MEDALS.

BY CHARLES WINTER.

AFTER the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, the Government, at the suggestion of the Duke of Wellington, decided to depart from the rule of conferring medals only upon the officers, and to issue a medal of one size and metal to all ranks of the British Army who were present during the three days' fighting, and to include the Thirty-fifth, Fifty-fourth, Fifty-ninth, and Ninety-first Regiments, with two brigades of Royal Artillery, who formed the reserve at Hal.

Several designs had been prepared, as it was at first intended to issue bronze medals to soldiers and a larger medal in gold to officers. The preparation of these designs was entrusted to Thomas Wyon, who engraved the portrait of the Prince Regent from a drawing by Sir Thomas Lawrence, and the figure of Victory on the reverse was taken from one of the beautiful Greek coins of Elis.¹ This latter design was selected by the Master of the Mint, Mr. W. W. Pole, who saw the coin in the collection of Sir Richard Paine.

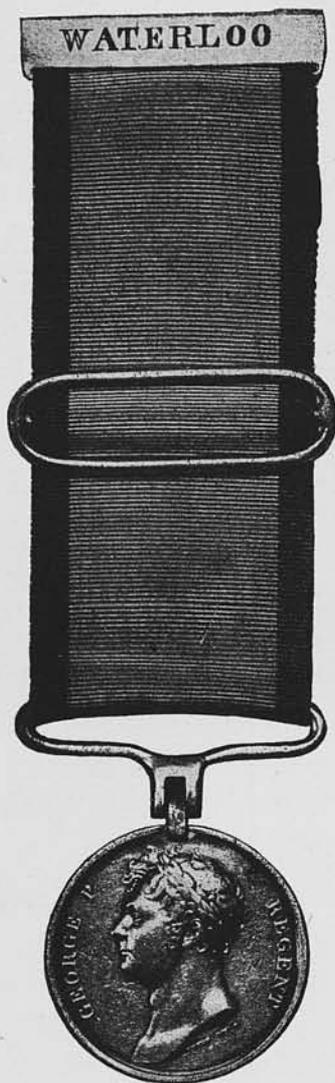
The authorities, having decided to carry out the suggestion of the Duke, the metal chosen for the Waterloo medal was silver. Size, $1\frac{3}{8}$ inch diameter.

Obverse.—A laureated bust of the Regent to left. Legend:
GEORGE P. REGENT.

Reverse.—Figure of Victory with outspread wings, seated on a cippus; she holds in her right hand a palm branch, in her left an olive branch. On the base or platform is the word WATERLOO. Above, WELLINGTON; below, JUNE 18. 1815.

¹ See *British Museum Catalogue of Greek Coins, Peloponnesus*, Elis, page 64, No. 51, Plate XII, 9.

The edge is stamped, incuse, with the rank, name, and regiment of the recipient. The suspender is somewhat crude, consisting of a large common split key-ring, attached to the medal by a steel



clip. It was worn with a red riband, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide, with blue borders, the colours being the same as those issued with the gold medals and crosses for the Peninsular War.

About 40,000 medals were struck, and the first instalment was reported by the Mint as being ready for delivery on March 4th, 1816.

The medal reproduced on the opposite page is that awarded to Serjeant Charles Ewart, of the 2nd or Royal North British Dragoons (Scots Greys), who captured the Eagle of the French 45th Regiment of the Line during the charge of the famous Union Brigade at Waterloo. Ewart carried the trophy into Brussels after the battle, and was rewarded with a commission. The combat figures in many pictures, the best known being the painting by Richard Ausdell, known as "The Fight for the Standard." Mr. E. E. Needes, who has kindly allowed me to reproduce this medal, writes: "As a collector of some years standing, it often occurred to me that this medal would be the most interesting one possible to acquire for this campaign, with, of course, the exception of the Duke of Wellington's, and it is not difficult to imagine my satisfaction when fortune gave me the opportunity of acquiring it, as until I actually saw it I had no knowledge that it was still preserved. The collecting of war medals is full of interest in so many ways, all of which appeal to me deeply, but by far the most attractive is what I consider the personal or 'sentimental' point of view, in which the particular specimen recalls a specific deed of bravery, or an historical event in which the recipient participated."

Regimentally, some Waterloo medals are exceedingly rare, and I suppose that that of the Royal Engineers is one of the rarest.

The bronze medal intended to have been issued to the soldiers was 1.42 inch diameter.

Obverse.—Laureated bust of the Regent, to left. Legend: GEORGE PRINCE REGENT 1815, the whole within an oak wreath.

Reverse.—As the officers' medal, but without the date.

Tancred saw a specimen of this medal which had stamped on the edge John Shaw, Mint.

The third medal is larger than the Waterloo medal, and measures 1.62 inch diameter.

Obverse.—Laureated and draped bust of the Regent, with brooch on right shoulder.

Reverse.—As No. 1.

HANOVERIAN WATERLOO MEDAL.

As guardian to the young Duke of Brunswick, the Prince Regent, by a decree, instituted in December, 1817, the Brunswick Waterloo medal, and commanded that it should be issued to the Hanoverian troops present at the battle. The medal was struck in silver and worn with clip, ring, and riband as No. 1.

Obverse.—Laureated bust of the Prince Regent to right. Legend, GEORG PRINZ REGENT 1815.

Reverse.—Two laurel branches enclosing WATERLOO JUN XVIII; above, a trophy of arms. Legend: HANNOVERSCHER TAPFERKEIT (for Hanoverian valour).

Edge.—Stamped as No. 1.

King George III, to commemorate the battle of Waterloo, and to reward his Hanoverian subjects, instituted on August 12th, 1815, the Order of the Guelph, but although only intended for Hanoverians it was largely bestowed upon British subjects. There was a military and a civil division, consisting of three classes each, namely, Grand Crosses, Commanders, and Knights; and a medal called the "Guelph medal" to reward non-commissioned officers and soldiers who had distinguished themselves.